

self-adjustment or reconciliation with the powers of life. In fact, their thoughts, projected along diverging lines, opened the many ways by which mankind was to explore its destinies.

Our own thoughts are very old. They have done duty in the minds of bygone men. They were first harnessed in the systems of those Great Ones (to whom I have been referring), those apparent sources of the world's convictions, who in their time set in new-found relationships, and made living, the *dissecta membra* of human experience and casual reflection. Yet the thoughts may be ours as well as theirs, by virtue of the very same title of having them flash joyfully upon the mind.

One realises a universal kinship in human need and aspiration when following such thoughts seemingly afar in the minds of these Founders who have passed on. They who may have died ages ago are nearer to us than the alien masses among whom we move. They are the spiritual fathers of us all, and we make ourselves consciously their sons by coming to know them in their achieved or striven-for adjustment of themselves with the eternal, and in their attunement of their desires to human limitations. Some men live in the eternities, and must at their peril keep in tune with them. The need of adaptation belongs to them peculiarly. Yet, in some degree, it pertains to all who are touched with meditation; and the endeavour for it, which is an

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**PROPHETS, POETS, AND PHILOSOPHERS  
OF THE ANCIENT WORLD**

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Prophets, Poets, and Philosophers  
of the Ancient World

BY  
HENRY OSBORN TAYLOR

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## PREFACE

THIS book appeared three years ago under the rather blind title of *Deliverance*. It may have suffered also from the lack of a preface to explain its character and contents. Its object was to set forth, in the briefest possible compass, the various ways in which some of the wisest men of the Ancient World approached the ultimate problems of humanity, and solved them. Their solutions embraced convictions concerning God and man, concerning human righteousness and happiness, and the principles of thought and action. Thus these thinkers satisfied their natures, and reached some sovereign reconciliation, some personal adjustment between their conception of the world about them and their own physical and spiritual experience.

All of them recognized the fundamental conclusion of the practical reason, that the doer of an act, the thinker of a thought, will not escape its consequences. This was their common agreement. Yet as they were of divers races, their temperaments differed; so did their convictions touching God and man, and their conceptions of man's noblest aims and highest good. They could not reach the same